CLAIMS

Having thus described our invention, what we claim as new and desire to secure

165　by Letters Patent is as follows:

1.　A method whereby a contractor uses a computer to assist the contractor in

managing activities of a plurality of subcontractors of goods and services, the

method comprising the following steps:

the contractor contracting with a manufacturer to build one or more devices,

170　　　the manufacturer contracting with the plurality of subcontractors to supply the

manufacturer with goods and services that the manufacturer will utilize in constructing

the devices,

once construction of any one of the devices begins, executing a real-time

computer program in the computer, the computer program having a status location for

175　each subcontractor,

changing the status location assigned to a particular subcontractor whenever that

subcontractor accesses the computer and reports a change in status,

the computer program changing a status indicator on a display to reflect the

change in the status location, and

180　　　the contractor or persons designated by the contractor monitoring the display of

subcontractor activities.

2.　The method of claim 1 wherein the device is a satellite.

3.　The method of claim 1 wherein the computer is accessed through an extranet site

via the Internet.

185　4.　The method of claim 1 wherein the display is an electronic dashboard.

5   5.   The method of claim 1 wherein the change is made by using a click box.

6.   The method of claim 1 wherein an electronic notice of change is sent to a

contractor-selected list of recipients whenever any change is entered.

7.   The method of claim 1 wherein the contractor has a manager who may, at his or

her discretion, make a choice to approve or disapprove any request for change,

10   may request more information, or may make no decision.

8.   The method of claim 7 wherein the choices are contained on a computerized

menu.

9.   The method of claim 1 wherein changes are designated to be of different classes.

10.   The method of claim 9 wherein the classes are designated as "No Change",

15   "Minor Change", and "Major Change".

11.   The method of claim 9 wherein each class is indicated on the display by a color

different from the color used to indicate any other change.

12.   The method of claim 11 wherein green indicates the "No Change" class, yellow

indicates the "Minor Change" class, and red indicates the "Major Change" class.

20   13.   The method of claim 9 wherein all changes are recorded in a database.

14.   The method of claim 9 wherein persons selected by the contractor are sent a

reminder whenever there is a status change for which no action has been reported

by the manager.

15.   The method of claim 14 wherein the reminders are made daily.

25   16.   The method of claim 14 wherein the reminders are made until the manager either

takes action or closes the status change.

17.   The method of claim 16 wherein the status change is closed after passage of a

5   contractor-selected period of time.

18.   The method of claim 17 wherein closing the status change is indicated by a change of color of a status indicator on the display.

19.   The method of claim 1 providing system security to ensure that a particular subcontractor can load only that data and view that information which pertains to

10   the devices being constructed or services being provided by that subcontractor.

20.   The method of claim 19 providing system security by password protection.

21.   A computer-implemented project management system for monitoring the activities of a plurality of subcontractors and service providers, the system comprising:

a computer,

15   a display,

software for execution in the computer,

the software aggregating the status of one or more manufacturers of devices,

the manufacturers having agreed with a contractor to construct and supply the

20   contractor with the devices,

the subcontractors having agreed with the manufacturers to supply specialized

goods or services as may be needed to manufacture the devices,

initiating execution of the computer software after construction of the devices

begins,

25   the computer software comprising:

instructions for changing a status indicator on the display whenever the

subcontractor accesses the computer to update a status location to reflect changes or

5   issues.

22.   The system of claim 21 wherein the computer software runs in real time.

23.   The system of claim 22 wherein the display is an electronic dashboard.

24.   The system of claim 23 wherein the device is a satellite.

25.   The system of claim 24 wherein each manufacturer, before construction can

10   begin, must provide information on all subcontractors and the materials or

services each might supply.

26.   The system of claim 25 wherein the dashboard shows the status of each satellite

under construction, the expected date of shipment from the factory for each

satellite, and the status of the project for each critical subsystem of the satellite.

15   27.   The system of claim 26 wherein each subcontractor may access the system

through an extranet site via the Internet to inform the contractor of a change in

project status for that subcontractor.

28.   The system of claim 27 wherein system security ensures that a subcontractor can

load only that data and view that information which pertains to the satellites being

20   constructed by the subcontractor.

29.   The system of claim 28 wherein security is provided by password protection

30.   The system of claim 27 wherein each project status is indicated by a color

different from that used to indicate any other project status.

31.   The system of claim 27 wherein the contractor has a manager who may click on a

25   status indicator on the display, which click results in a subsidiary screen being

displayed, which subsidiary screen provides in detail and in summary the nature

of the change indicated by the status change.

5   32.   The system of claim 31 wherein the subsidiary screen is the On Line Review and

Approval screen.

33.   The system of claim 31 wherein the manager reviews any information and either

approves or disapproves the change on-line.

34.   The system of claim 27 wherein the contractor has a manager who may click on a

10   status indicator on the display which click results in a subsidiary screen being

displayed, which subsidiary screen provides, in detail and in summary,

information from which screen the manager may determine if any subcontractor

is supplying the same components or materials to other device manufacturers.

35.   The system of claim 34 wherein the information from the screen permits the

15   manager to evaluate the potential impact of the subcontractor's supplying the

same components to other device manufacturers.

36.   The system of claim 34 wherein the subsidiary screen is the Subcontractor Early

Alert screen.

37.   A method for project management of complex construction projects comprising:

20   dividing the project into subprojects,

requiring those persons responsible for each subproject to supply a report to a

project manager whenever any events occur or are anticipated to occur which events may

delay completion of the project as scheduled,

using a computer system comprised of hardware and software to receive the

25   reports,

executing the computer software in real time,

displaying a status for each subproject on a display device,